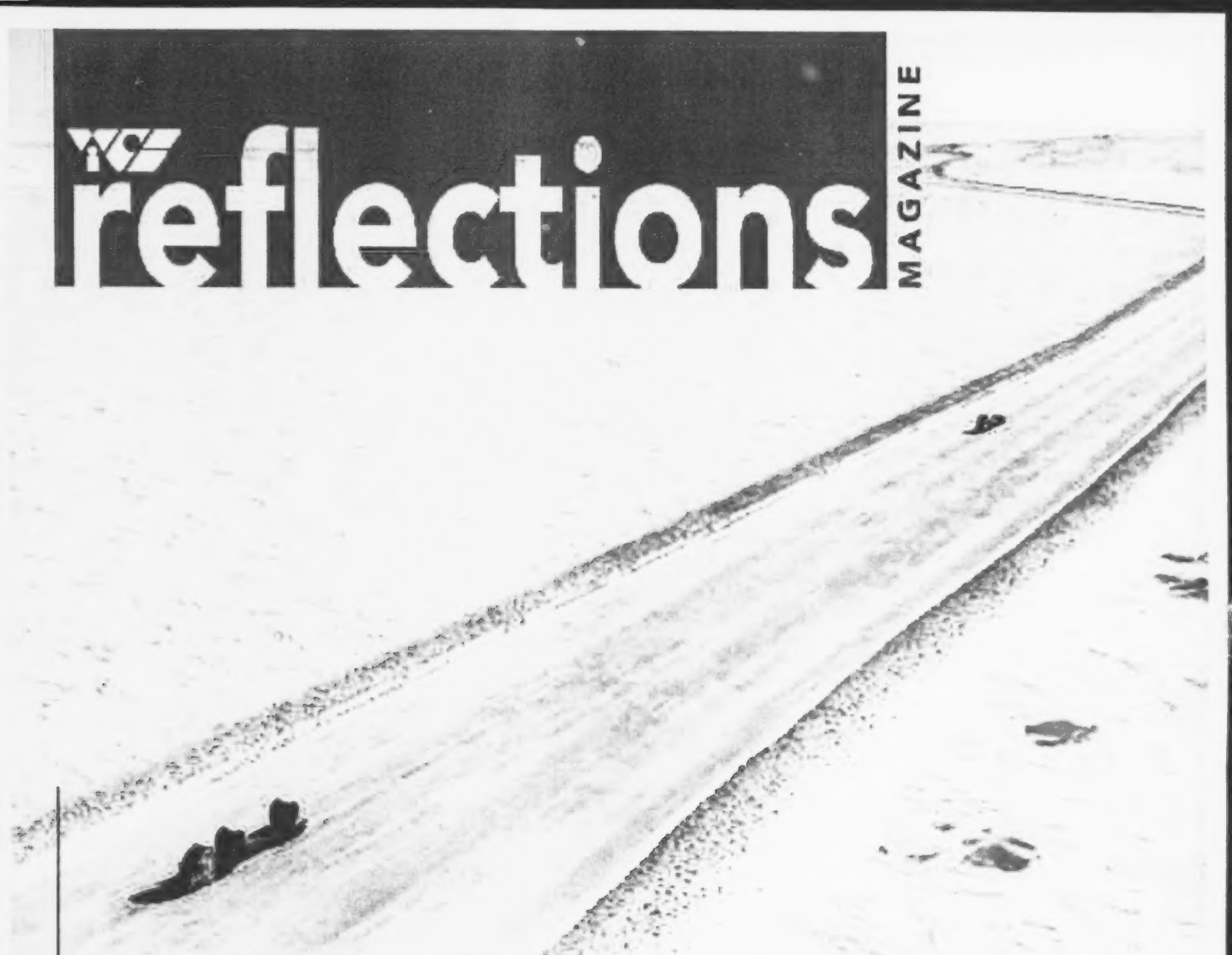
reflections

MAGAZINE



Ice Harvest

When Mother Nature cooperates, you do as much as you can

Of Life and Limb

Nunavut's Prosthetics Program

The Slippery Slope

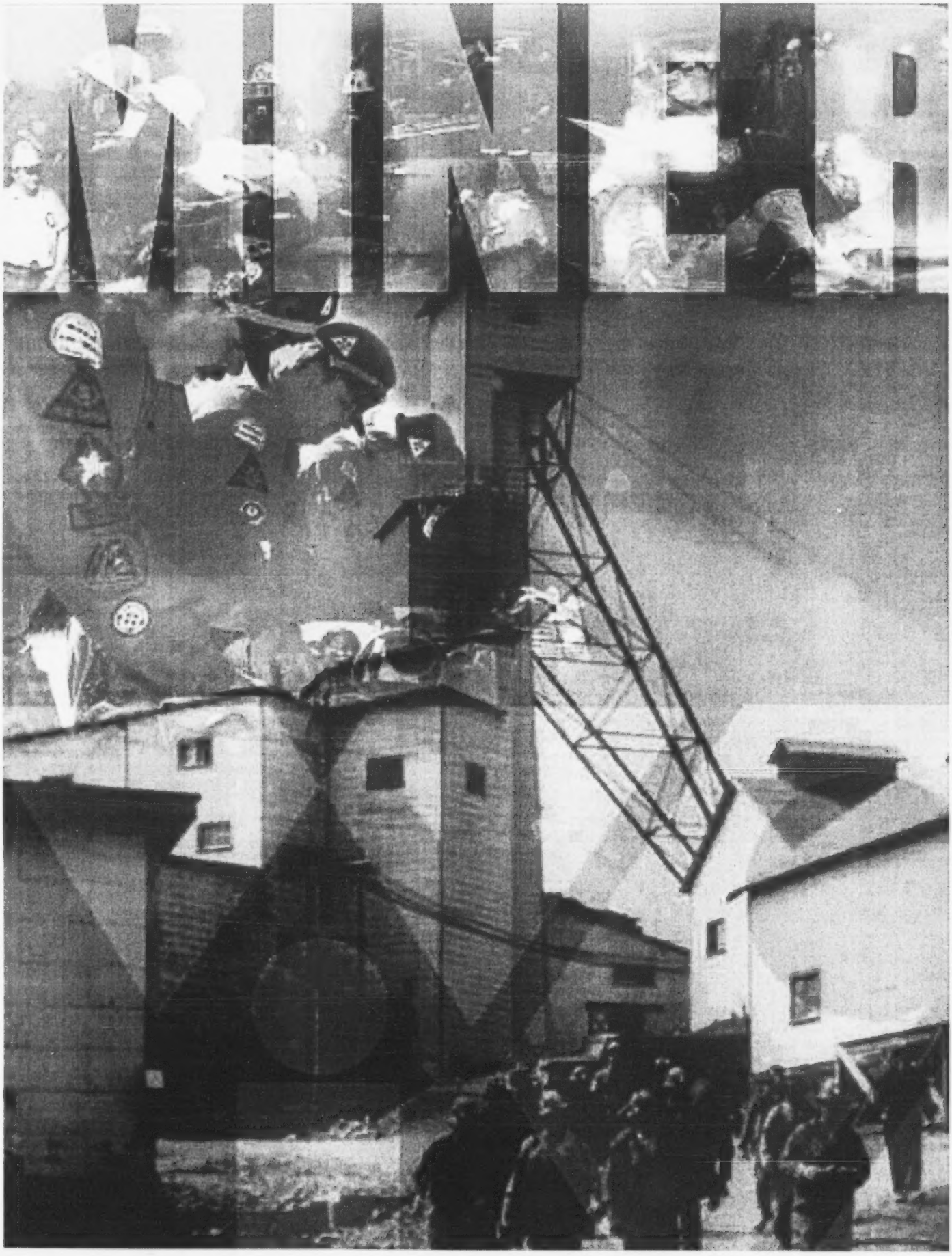
How employers can keep common mistakes from snowballing into fraud

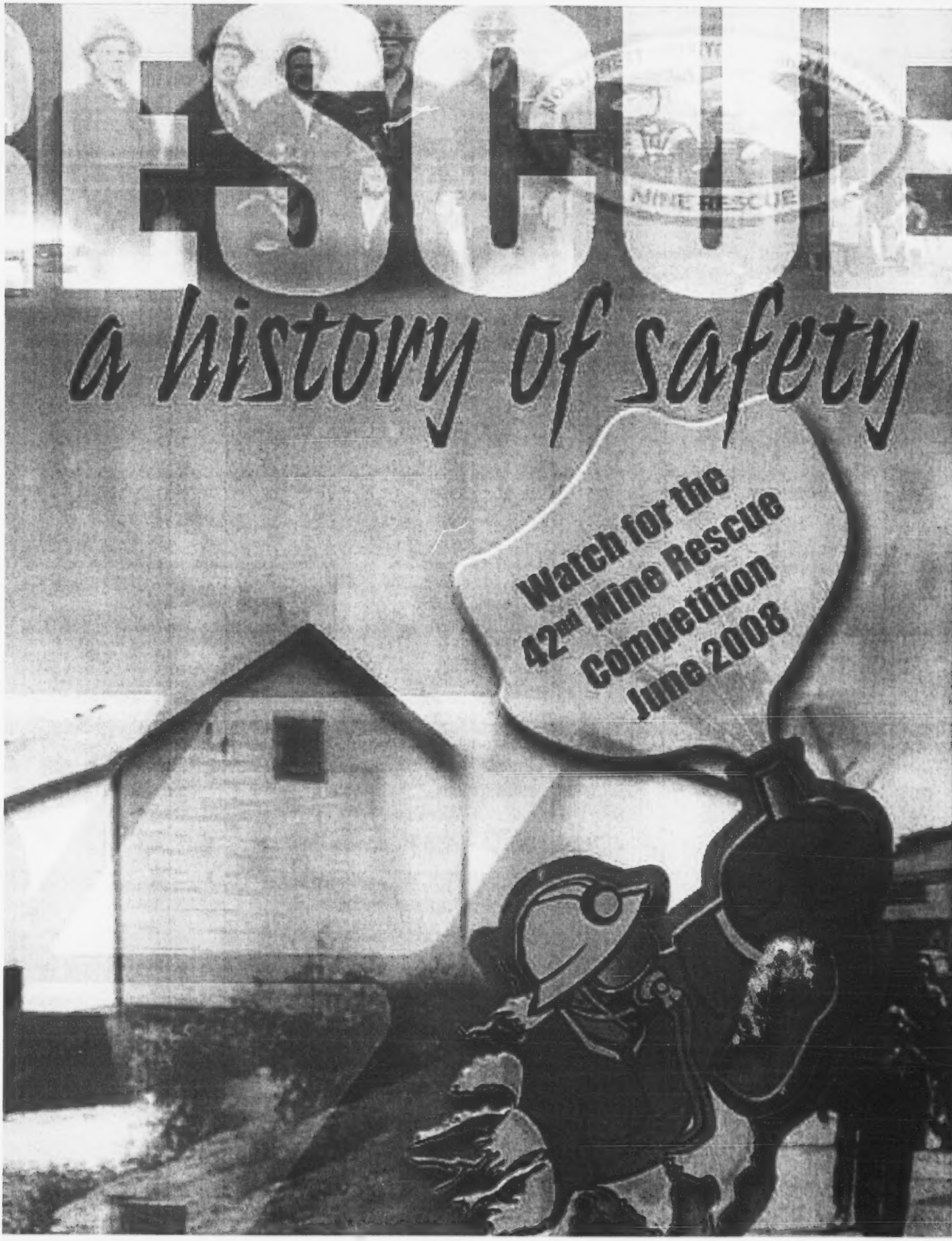
The Times They Are A-Changin'

New workers' compensation legislation

Winter 2008

Reflecting on **Safe Workplace Practices** Across the North




RESCUE
a history of safety
Watch for the
42nd Mine Rescue
Competition
June 2008

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Cover: Photo courtesy of Diavik Diamond Mines Inc.

DEVOLUTION

(Unsafe work practices are an **evolutionary step backwards.**)

Last year, 1 in 4 time loss claims were caused by overexertion.

In the construction industry, overexertion caused 19% of all time loss claims in 2007.

Overexertion happens when people push their bodies too far.

It happens when you make your body do something it is not capable of doing.

Go Safe. KNOW YOUR LIMITS.

Go SAFE is a program that helps. If you're an employer who needs help implementing a health and safety program, please contact us.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD
Northwest Territories and Nunavut

www.wcb.nt.ca 1.800.661.0792
www.wcbnunavut.ca 1.877.404.4407

EDITORS' LETTER

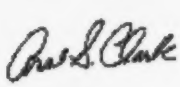
Safety is everyone's responsibility. With the right tools, training, and commitment, we can prevent workplace injuries and ensure northern workers return home safely every day. To achieve our Mission – promote workplace safety and care for injured workers – we raised the bar on safety and prevention by making this magazine a semi-annual publication.

Reflections is not only a safety resource, but a means of communication. As a semi-annual publication, it provides the WCB with the opportunity to better serve you, our stakeholders. With current information on safety concerns, strategies, and programs relevant to the northern workforce, it can strengthen the lines of communication between workers, employers, and our Board.

Anne Clark

This issue includes articles on cold weather and ice road safety, our new workers' compensation legislation, how common errors can snowball into fraud, our consultation process, our Training on the Job program for injured workers, and a WCB prosthetics clinic program unique to the North.

Your feedback from the past two issues is astounding. Let's keep the lines of communication open. I encourage you to share your ideas, comments, and questions with us. With your help, we can make safety happen and continue to change workplace safety cultures across the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Contact us at reflections@wcb.nt.ca.



Anne Clark
President & CEO

Denny Rodgers
Governance Council Chairperson

GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

Denny Rodgers, Chairperson

Denny Rodgers of Inuvik was appointed Chairperson of the WCB Governance Council in October 2005. Prior to this, Denny served as a Public Interest Representative, Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee, Governance Council Vice Chairperson, and Acting Chairperson of the Governance Council from May 1, 2005 until his formal appointment to Chairperson on October 13 of the same year. Denny's term was recently extended to October 2009.

Shona Barkley,
Vice Chair and Labour Representative

Shona Barkley serves on the Governance Council as the Vice Chairperson and as a Labour Representative. In June 2006, she was reappointed for a three-year term. Shona currently lives in Iqaluit.

George Kuksuk,
Public Interest Representative

George Kuksuk of Arviat was reappointed to the position of Public Interest Representative in June 2007, for a three-year term.

Steve Petersen, Labour Representative

Steve Petersen is a long-time northerner who currently resides in Yellowknife. Steve has served on the Governance Council as a Labour Representative since May 2003; he was reappointed for a two-year term in May 2006.

Bill Aho, Employer Representative

Bill Aho of Yellowknife currently serves on the Governance Council as an Employer Representative. He was reappointed in May 2006, for a two-year term.

Karin McDonald, Employer Representative

Karin McDonald of Inuvik was appointed to the Governance Council as an Employer Representative in October 2004, for a three-year term. Recently, Karin's term was extended to October 2009.

Fred Koe, Public Interest Representative

Fred Koe of Yellowknife was appointed to the Governance Council as a Public Interest Representative in February 2007, for a three-year term.

For more information on any of our Governance Council members, please visit our website at www.wcb.nt.ca or www.wcbnunavut.ca.

DID WE DELIVER?

The Mission of the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut is clear - promote workplace safety and care for injured workers. *Reflections* plays a big part in getting the job done.

We want to hear from you – good or bad. If *Reflections* inspires you, encourages you, gives you insight into how the WCB works, or just gets you thinking about the importance of safety in the workplace, please let us know.

Send your comments and/or questions to:

Reflections
Box 8888
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R3

E-mail: reflections@wcb.nt.ca

WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY:

Thanks for the Summer 2007 copy of *Reflections* Magazine – you folks have done a terrific job with this publication and I was happy to contribute to your feature story. Safe workplaces truly are wanted, needed, and something we all have the right to expect. It's just wonderful to read a magazine published by another northern WCB, that is also completely devoted to injury prevention and promoting workplace safety in the North for northerners. I intend to pass your magazine on to members of our Board and would even like a few extra copies (please) to share with the Yukon's Workers' Compensation Health & Safety Board. Keep up the good work!

Melanie Pettefer, Manager, Northern Safety Network Yukon

Having gone through the magazine, I found it very informative and I believe the magazine will be an invaluable resource for our employees as we work towards the common goal of reducing or eliminating workplace injuries. I hereby request additional copies (10) that will be made available to our employees.

Patrick T. Mugoni, Manager, Safety Management System, Arctic Sunwest Charters

We're building safety standards across the North...

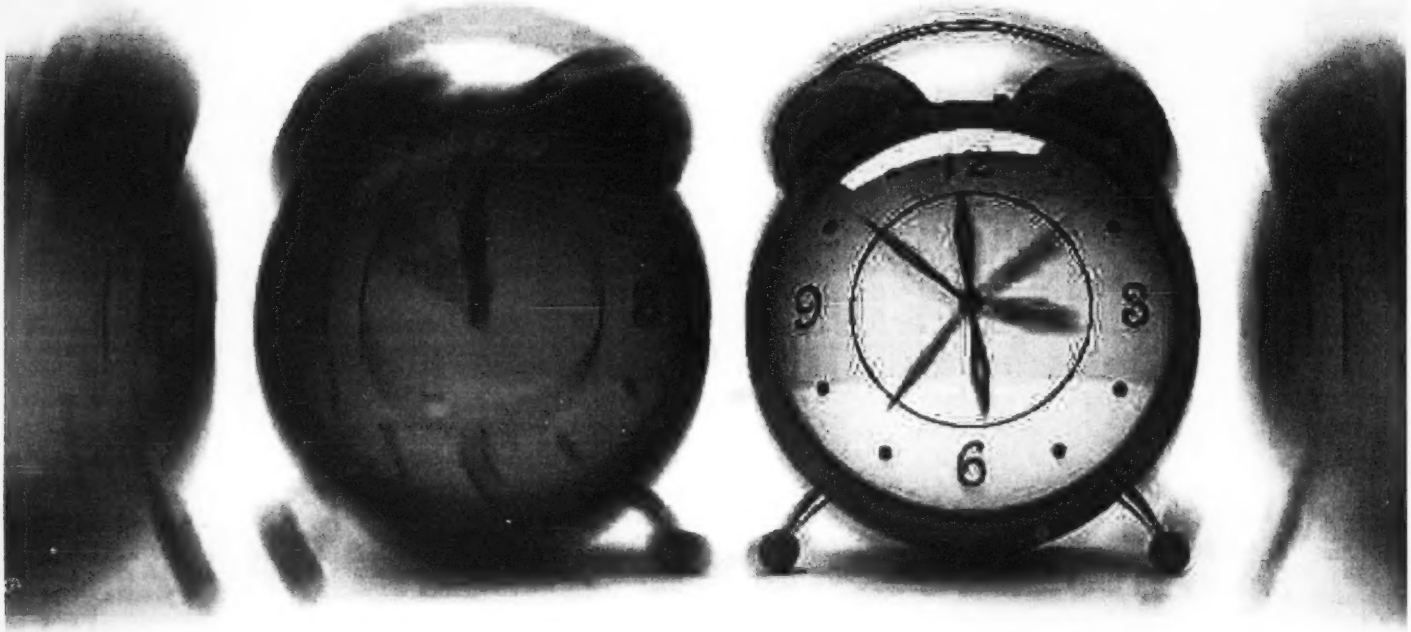
The newly-formed Northern Construction Safety Association is working with industry in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to significantly reduce human, social, and economic losses as a result of workplace accidents, injuries, and illnesses.

For more information on the NCSA and its services, please contact 867.920.0763.

northern construction
SAFETY ASSOCIATION

www.ncsa-nt.ca • www.ncsa-nu.ca

THE TIMES.....



THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

It's been several decades since Bob Dylan penned the song, but the lyrics still ring true. The times they are a-changin' and the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (WCB) recognizes the need to change with them. New workers' compensation legislation will come into effect in the NWT and Nunavut in April 2008. The legislation reflects modern workers' compensation concepts and practices, feedback from our stakeholders, and the North's unique needs. The new *Act* also reflects changes to the North since the original *Act* was passed.

So what are SOME of the CHANGES?

Before we get into specifics, let's take a step back. Even with new legislation, WCB operations will still be carried out according to our Mission. Emphasis on workplace safety and prevention will continue, and workers injured on the job will still be cared for.

New name to better reflect what we do.

Once the *Act* comes into force, we will be known as the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. This name expresses what we do and believe. It's not enough to compensate injured workers. We also work to prevent workplace injuries and the suffering that results from them.

A statement of purpose within the *Act*.

The principles that guide workers' compensation are important. To stress their importance, they have been included in the *Act* as a purpose statement. Workers' compensation exists "to establish an open, fair and comprehensive system of compulsory no-fault mutual insurance for workers and employers." The purpose statement identifies our service goals, and how these should be achieved and improved.

Clearer language and better organization.

When the new *Act* was drafted, care was taken to reduce legalese to make the language as clear and plain as possible. The *Act* was also reorganized for better flow of information. For example, in the old *Act*, you might have to search through several sections and many pages to find different references to the same subject, such as compensation or appeals. Now these subjects are grouped together. This will make the *Act* easier to use, and it will be easier for workers and employers to find information specific to their needs.

More flexibility to award benefits.

The new *Act* will maximize our ability to help workers, particularly those whose cases or circumstances are unusual. For example, the new *Act* allows us the discretion to pay extra money to workers if the amount they would normally be entitled to isn't adequate for their injuries or situations.

Clarification of causation.

When there is more than one source of an injury or illness, under the new *Act*, claimants can be compensated when work is a material cause of this injury or illness.

Provisions to reward employers for their workplace safety performance and results.

The new *Act* includes a section about refunds of assessments to employers who take steps to improve workplace safety and decrease claims costs. Conversely, the *Act* also includes a section about penalties for employers who don't take steps to improve workplace safety and decrease claims costs. If this sounds familiar, it should: this reflects our Safe Advantage program.

Allowing the Headquarters' location to change.

While there are no current plans to move the Head Office, it is no longer written into the law that Headquarters must be in Yellowknife.

Structural changes to the Appeals Tribunal.

To speed up the appeals process, the Appeals Tribunal is changing to a one-person adjudication model. If a case is complicated, the Chair of the Appeals Tribunal can still ask a panel of three members to hear the case. The new *Act* also clarifies that members will be appointed based on qualifications; such as, experience as a member of an administrative tribunal or court, or good standing as a member of a law society in Canada. Equal qualifications will also be considered.

Deadlines for Reviews and Appeals, and on Appeals Decisions.

The new *Act* limits how long a person has to ask for a review or appeal of a decision. Unless there is a good reason for the delay, a person has three years to ask the Review Committee to look at a decision. Someone appealing a Review Committee decision also has to do so within three years of that decision. The law also limits how long the Appeals Tribunal has to make a decision. A decision must now be made within 90 days of a hearing.

The changes to the *Workers' Compensation Act* represent several years of research and consultation with stakeholders; they also reflect the needs of the northerners we serve. The new *Act* will be available on our website once it comes into effect on April 1, 2008.

SKILLS COMPÉTENCES CANADA
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Traditional Knowledge...

The WCB is a proud sponsor of the annual Territorial Skills Canada Competitions in the NWT and NU.

For more information on workplace safety, please contact the WCB.

Northwest Territories:
www.wcb.nt.ca 1.800.661.0792

Nunavut:
www.wcbnunavut.ca 1.877.404.4407

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD
Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Know what's going on. Know your WCB.

Sign up for the WCB Online Newsletter Today!

Insight:
A Look At Safety & Service

Stay up-to-date on safety news
and WCB operations with
Insight: A Look At Safety & Service.
Sign up for *Insight* on the WCB website.
www.wcb.nt.ca or **www.wcbnunavut.ca**

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD
Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Promote workplace safety and care for injured workers.

FROSTBITE

Since 2000, workers have submitted 55 claims for frostbite-related injuries. On average, each frostbite claim resulted in seven lost work days.

Frostbite is a common, cold-weather injury. Over the last seven years, 55 WCB claims were frostbite-related; each amounted to an average of seven lost work days. We often associate frostbite with being stuck outside for long hours or multiple days, but we are vulnerable to a nasty nip from Jack Frost when walking home on a cold day or taking a quick snowmobile ride on a crisp winter evening.

Frostbite is caused by exposure to severe cold. It is caused when skin tissues freeze; damaging blood vessels, reducing blood flow, and increasing chances of developing gangrene.

Touching cold metal objects with bare hands is more likely to cause frostbite than exposure to cold air. This is because heat is quickly transferred from skin to metal. So, in cold weather, make sure you are using equipment you can operate with gloved hands.

Understanding the signs of, and first aid for, frostbite can help keep limbs and digits intact. The tear-out card below helps determine the actual temperature by adding the wind-chill factor to air temperature, and lets users know how long is too long to stay outside. This card is easily folded for storage in your wallet; accessing it regularly in cold weather will help keep you aware of your body's limits.

WHAT GOT BIT:

Fingers/Hands 20 claims
Toes/Feet 13 claims
Face 9 claims
Ears 3 claims
Legs 3 claims

SKILLS COMPÉTENCES CANADA NUNAVUT

is the Skills of Today

The WCB is a proud sponsor of the annual Territorial Skills Canada Competitions in the NWT and NU.

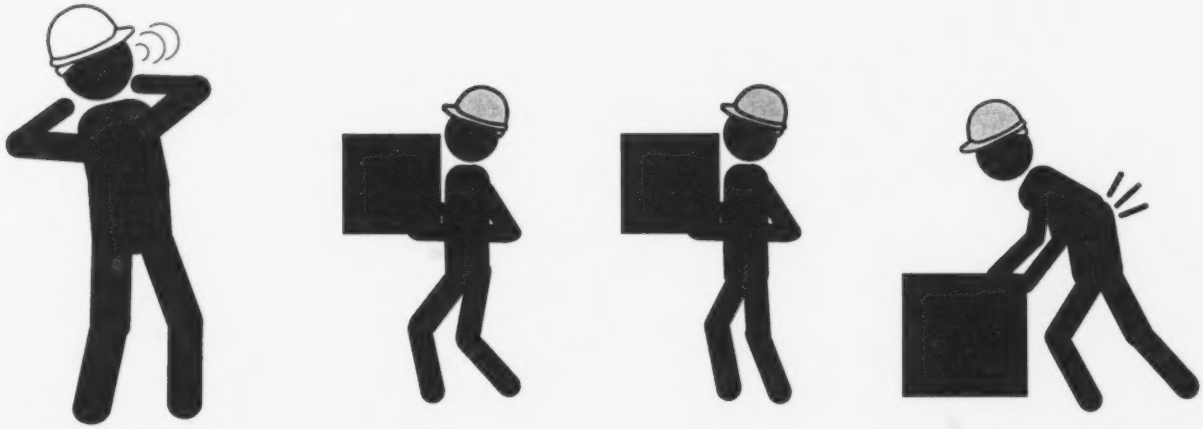
For more information on workplace safety, please contact the WCB.

Northwest Territories:
www.wcb.nt.ca 1.800.661.0792

Nunavut:
www.wcbnunavut.ca 1.877.404.4407

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD
Northwest Territories and Nunavut

INEXPERIENCE



Unsafe work practices can be
avoided thrcugh safety training.

Last year, 1 in 4 time loss claims were caused by overexertion.

Overexertion happens when people push their bodies too far.

It happens when you make your body do something it is not capable of doing.

New Workers represent 17% of our northern workforce.

Go Safe. TRAIN NEW WORKERS TO KNOW THEIR LIMITS.

Go SAFE is a program that helps. If you're an employer who needs help implementing a health and safety program, please contact us.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD
Northwest Territories and Nunavut

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Ice Harvest

Any flatlander knows you need rain while the sun shines. Mother Nature cooperates, you do as much as you can. The long hot days of summer are a farmer's best friend when the harvest starts. In the North, Mother Nature also reigns over industry, but here it's the exact opposite of the prairies. For truckers driving the ice road from Tibbitt Lake to Contwoyto, and for mines and exploration camps waiting for supplies at the end, they know they've hit the jackpot when the cold, short days settle in.

Photo courtesy of Diavik Diamond Mines Inc.

The window of opportunity is small. On average, there are 65 trucking days in a season. That's 65 days to get more than 300,000 tonnes of cargo to the BHP Billiton Ekati Mine, the Diavik Mine, the DeBeers Snap Lake Mine, the Tahera Mine, the Lupin Mine, and numerous exploration sites en route. This 300,000 tonnes of cargo translates into roughly 11,000 loads hauled up the ice road. Operating 24/7, we are talking about a very busy stretch of highway.

Despite the fact ice starts creeping over area lakes and rivers by mid-November, construction of the 600-kilometre ice road typically doesn't start until after Christmas. Just building the road can take up to a month. The first load doesn't hit the ice until late January and, by the end of March, Mother Nature is usually pushing thermometers up.

According to Erik Madsen, Director of Operations for the Tibbitt to Contwoyto Winter Road Joint Venture, the pressure is on. "It is a very stressful time to move that amount of equipment and supplies up the ice road," says Madsen.

The Tibbitt to Contwoyto ice road is arguably the longest of its kind in the world. First built in 1983 to service Echo Bay Mine, it was operated by Echo Bay Mines Ltd. until 2001, when the Winter Road Joint Venture took over. Currently, the Joint Venture

is a partnership between the Ekati and Diavik diamond mines, and is responsible for coordinating ice road operations. Contractors are hired to construct, maintain, monitor, and secure the ice road. Nuna Logistics Ltd. builds and maintains the ice road, EBA Engineering Consultants Ltd. handles ice engineering, and SECURE Check Services provides security.

Early in the season, the road is surveyed by air to assess the situation. Once the ice is 12 inches thick, the profiling process starts. "Profiling the ice is of the utmost of importance at the early stages of building an ice road. The SIR 3000 is profiling equipment that you drag behind a vehicle. It's a computer that measures the thickness of the ice. From there, they look at the historical records to see if they're ahead of the game, if it is average, etc. They build a plan from there," says Madsen.

Profiling helps determine trends and isolate changes in ice depths. The science behind ice roads continues to improve as engineers develop highly-sophisticated technology to capture more lake information. As Hugh McKercher, an Inspector of Mines with the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (WCB) points out, knowledge is key. "You're dealing with nature. Nature throws curves and, over the years, people with experience have come to recognize things that twig what's happening below the ice."

A Mine Inspector with over a decade of experience, McKercher has spent extensive time traveling northern highways. Regulation of the ice road falls under the *Mine Health and Safety Act*. McKercher and his WCB counterparts ensure the Joint Venture complies with the *Act* and specific procedures are followed at all times. These procedures are based on years of experience and engineering analysis. They include everything from the minimum ice thickness required to operate equipment, to speed limits, to distance between trucks, to recording profile data.

"Formal inspections of major ice roads are done once a month from January to March. I'll spend two or three days traveling with the foreman to see the areas they're working on," says McKercher. "We're looking for people working on thin ice, or plowing roads without profiling."

When it comes to the ice road, safety is at the forefront. According to Madsen, it's about building a safety culture of teamwork. "The most important aspect is educating everyone on how important the safety aspect is and what the rules of the road are. If someone speeds and we have a blow-out, it affects everyone," says Madsen. "Everything comes to a stand-still. Mines don't get their supplies and truckers aren't getting paid. You need a total team-effort to make it work – truckers, Nuna, and security."

RTL Robinson Enterprises Ltd. is the largest trucking outfit running goods up the Tibbit to Contwoyto ice road. Before drivers even get behind

The **future** of the **ice road** faces **obstacles**. Global warming threatens to **shorten the season** even further, and the **load demands** are not decreasing anytime soon.

the wheel, they have to complete an orientation on the ice road. The orientation is created and distributed by the Joint Venture. It is mandatory for all drivers, regardless of their experience. To supplement the orientation, RTL also conducts further safety training with their drivers. They discuss company rules and procedures, winter survival techniques, storms, first aid, fatigue management, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), servicing guidelines, and they review past emergencies.

(continued on next page)

Photos courtesy of Diavik Diamond Mines Inc.

"Safety is first and foremost in everyone's work. Measures are taken to ensure that happens. We want the loads to make it but not at the expense of a life. There is no room for cowboys," shares Mike Suchlandt, Personnel and Safety Manager with RTL.

Suchlandt says there is a misconception that the North is the new Wild West and there are no rules to follow. To make sure rookie drivers don't push the limits, RTL uses a buddy system. "We put a new guy with a seasoned driver. One guy will be the leader and he'll have three new guys following him," says Suchlandt.

For truckers, adhering to posted speed limits is the ultimate goal. "It's like a normal road. It needs to bend and flex. As it bends and flexes you have water underneath moving, which creates water waves. Excessive speed creates bigger waves, which can lead to blow-outs," says Suchlandt.

Some blow-outs are fixable but others force the road to be re-routed or even shut down for a period of time. Last season, security patrolling the ice road gave 120 verbal warnings for driving infractions. Nine five-day suspensions were given out and seven drivers were suspended for the season. To put that into perspective, 132 (infractions) out of 11,000 (loads) is only 1.2%, which means almost all truckers are following ice road procedures.

On the WCB side of things, violation of the *Mine Health and Safety Act* has also been minimal. "We don't come across a lot of offenses," says McKercher. "We try to prevent it before it happens. We've done a lot of communication between ourselves and the supervision on the ice roads." McKercher adds that environmental factors play a big role in the majority of incidents on the ice road, "Most accidents are nature driven."

Much as a combine on a field is indicative of the prairies, driving the Tibbitt to Contwoyto ice road is a truly northern experience. The concept of ice roads isn't new, but that doesn't mean it's lost its "WOW" factor. "A lot of guys remark on the fabulous scenery with the northern lights. Lots of animal sightings. You get guys telling you they're glad they came for the experience," says Suchlandt.

The future of the ice road faces obstacles. Global warming threatens to shorten the season even further and the load demands are not decreasing anytime soon. More stuff needs to be shipped further North in shorter time frames. The Joint Venture is currently discussing options like creating a land road or approaching the mines from the Arctic Ocean but, as it stands, Mother Nature still holds the cards.

EMPLOYER'S PAYROLL STATEMENT

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD
Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Important Notice To All Employers

If you have not submitted your Employer's Payroll Statement for 2007 and Estimate for 2008, the deadline for submission is **February 28, 2008.**

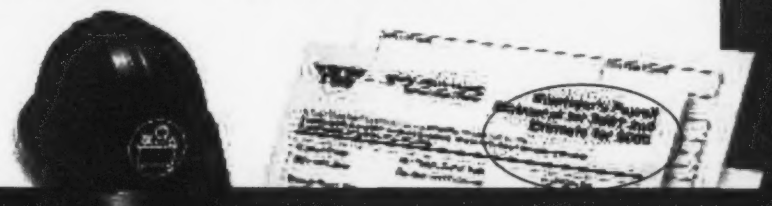
You are required to complete all three pages of your Employer's Payroll Statement.

Nunavut Employers
for any inquiries call
867-979-8501

NWT Employers
for any inquiries call
867-873-4596

DID YOU KNOW?

A penalty of 15% of your provisional assessment will be levied for the late submission of your Employer's Payroll Statement.



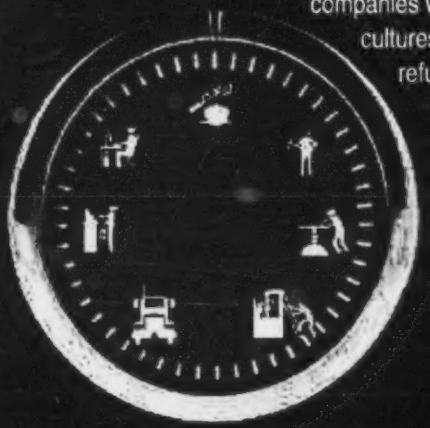
Work Safe:
It's to your Advantage

The Goal:
Safe workplaces.

The Reality:
A small portion of companies accounts for the majority of accident costs.

The Solution:
Safe Advantage.

ADVANTAGE encourages large employers to improve their safety cultures. Big companies with good safety cultures could receive partial refunds of assessments.



Change the reality.

Make workers' safety your top priority.

Safety Pays!

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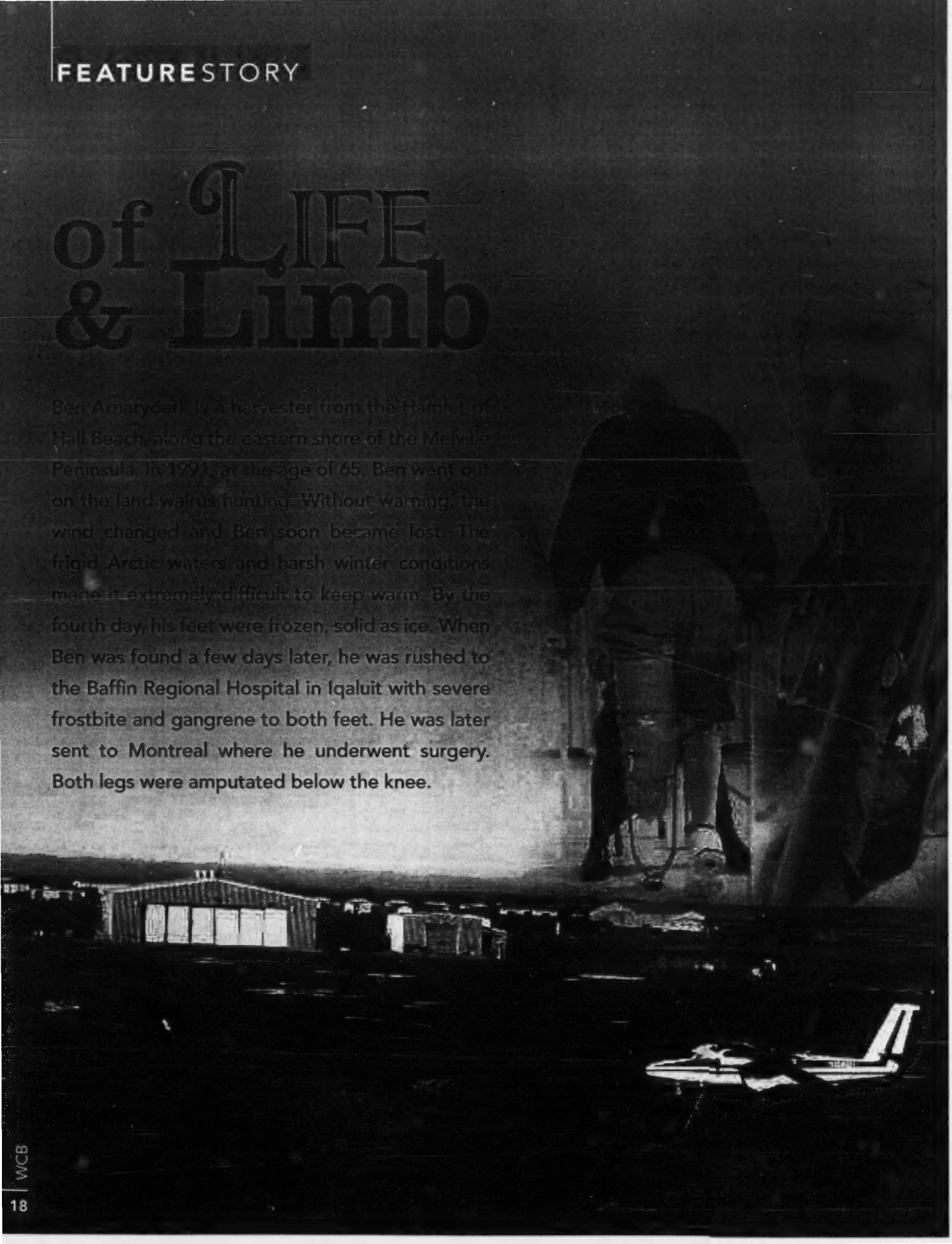
www.wcb.nt.ca

NU: 1-877-404-4407
www.wcbnunavut.ca

# of LIFE & Limb

Ben Arnaryoark is a harvester from the Hamlet of Hall Beach, along the eastern shore of the Melville Peninsula. In 1991, at the age of 65, Ben went out on the land walrus hunting. Without warning, the wind changed and Ben soon became lost. The frigid Arctic waters and harsh winter conditions made it extremely difficult to keep warm. By the fourth day, his feet were frozen, solid as ice. When Ben was found a few days later, he was rushed to the Baffin Regional Hospital in Iqaluit with severe frostbite and gangrene to both feet. He was later sent to Montreal where he underwent surgery. Both legs were amputated below the knee.



Ten years earlier in Cape Dorset, on the tip of the Fox Peninsula on Baffin Island, Annie Manning tripped at work. Her fall resulted in the complete dislocation of her left knee. Annie was transferred to the Baffin Regional Hospital in Iqaluit, where they determined they would not be able to stabilize the knee joint effectively. At the same time, they became concerned about the pressure sore developing on her left heel. She returned to work in 1982, but the condition of the pressure sore on her heel was not improving. Annie developed osteomyelitis, an infection of bone or bone marrow, in her left leg as a result of the chronic pressure sore. In March 1984, surgeons in Montreal amputated her leg, below the knee, to prevent the infection from spreading.

With a jurisdiction that spans 3, 439, 296 km^2, approximately 34.3% of Canada's total land area, the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (WCB) faces unique challenges to provide quality services to workers and employers. Due to the isolated location of many northern communities and their distance from medical equipment and expertise, workers who are seriously injured must travel south to receive the medical care they need. This is a fact of life when you live and work in the North.

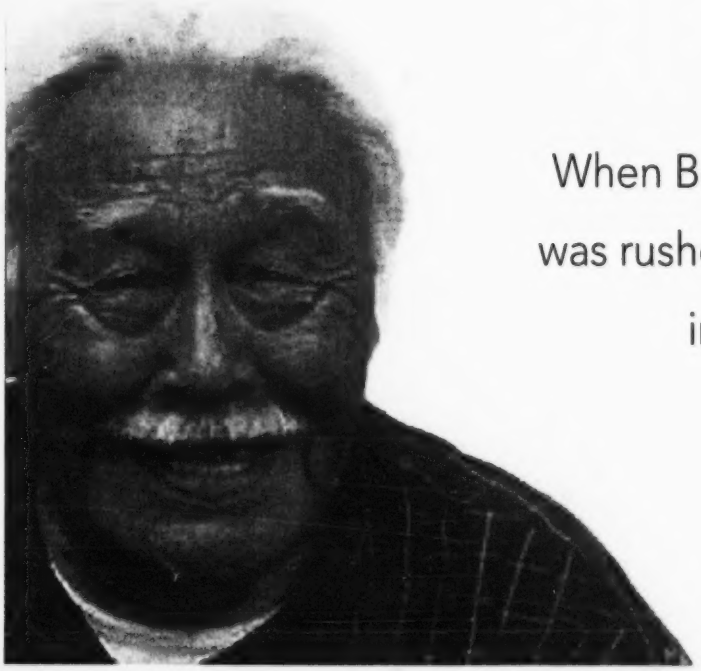
There are currently eight injured workers with amputations in Nunavut that require the use of artificial limbs. Like other injured workers, if they had any problems, large or small, with their prosthesis, little could be done in the North.

When Ben and Annie were injured, they were required to travel to Montreal via Iqaluit to receive medical treatment. It was also necessary for them to travel south up to twice a year for check-ups, prosthesis repairs, or to mold, cast, and fit a new device.

Traveling was not always easy. Medical appointments that could normally take place at the convenience of the patient had to be tightly scheduled into their itineraries. These injured workers often spent weeks away from home in a big city where their first language was neither spoken nor recognized. They endured restricted travel times due to the limited flight schedules in and out of their small northern communities, periods of discomfort caused by their artificial limbs, long flights, and unexpected layovers.

These injured workers also faced many challenges at home. The rocky northern terrain is unique and very different compared to southern Canada. Although prosthetic devices are designed to enhance mobility, they are not built with the North in mind. Because of the harsh climate and untamed terrain, prosthetics often require increased insulation and cushioning to ensure these injured workers are comfortable and warm while they are out on the land or simply getting to and from work.

The costs, stresses, and complications of living in the North, and traveling south, were becoming a cause for concern. Something needed to be done.



When Ben was found [a few days later] he was rushed to the Baffin Regional Hospital in Iqaluit, with severe frostbite and gangrene to both feet.

In the fall of 1999, Dr. David King, Chief Medical Advisor for the WCB, suggested a pilot Prosthetics Clinic be held in Nunavut. A trial clinic would determine whether or not the concerns and health issues of the workers could be addressed without flying over 2000 miles. Instead, the WCB would bring the medical expertise to the injured workers.

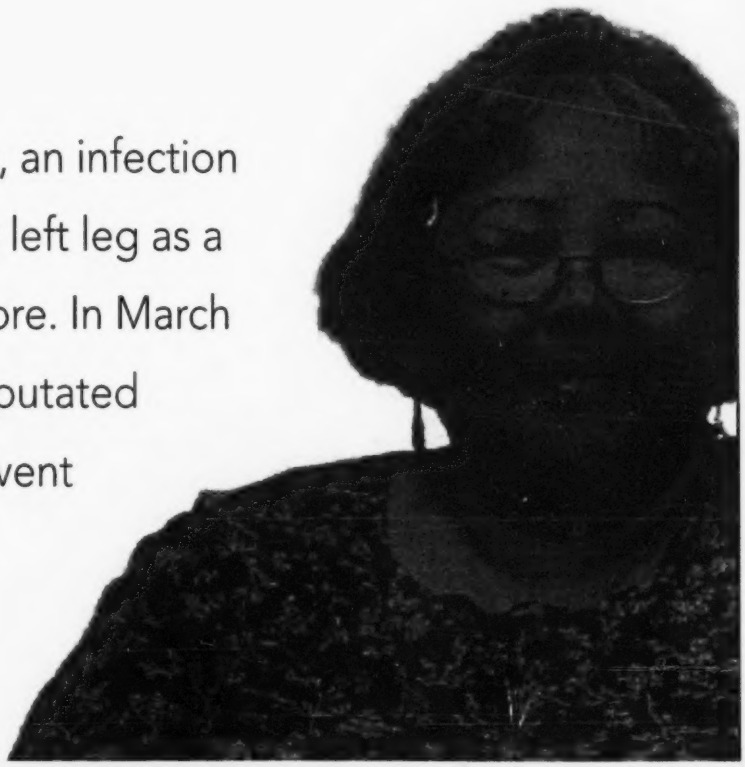
The pilot clinic was held in Hall Beach, Nunavut. David Nielen, Certified Prosthetist/Orthotist from the Ottawa Hospital's Rehabilitation Centre, joined Dr. King to examine four workers living in the Hall Beach area. Three of the four workers had double, lower extremity amputations, including Ben. All of them were Harvesters, covered by the Government of Nunavut through the WCB's Harvesters Program.

The clinic was considered a success. Although they did not have access to prosthetic tools and equipment, Dr. King and Nielen were able to assess each of the workers and determine an action plan suited to the needs of each individual. Since the initial visit to Hall Beach, the clinic has been held annually in Iqaluit.

The benefits of this program have been numerous. David Nielen has participated in seven of the eight WCB clinics held since 1999. He has come to know these workers over his many visits to the North and their time spent in Ottawa. When asked what changes he has seen in the workers since the clinic began, he says the most notable has been their demeanors. "They are generally quite pleased to be seen closer to home," he says. Since the clinic was established, travel south has been reduced to once a year, as a follow-up to the Iqaluit clinic, if necessary. With a regularly-scheduled visit closer to home, "they now know with confidence that, if there is a problem requiring further intervention, it will be dealt with in Ottawa within an appropriate period of time," says Nielen.

This program also provides the WCB with a better appreciation of the workers' actual disabilities resulting from the amputation. "We get to observe directly and gain first-hand knowledge of their difficulties with performing the activities of daily living in Nunavut," explained Dr. King. Annie has enjoyed the benefits of having the clinic closer to home. She recalls the difficulties of traveling with an artificial leg, and her time away from home. "I am happy that, over the years, the WCB system has improved," she says. She believes that it is important that the doctors see the North, the terrain, and how they move on the land. Their observations are crucial to selecting components for the prosthesis to suit the local

Annie developed osteomyelitis, an infection of bone or bone marrow, in her left leg as a result of the chronic pressure sore. In March 1984, surgeons in Montreal amputated her leg, below the knee, to prevent the infection from spreading.



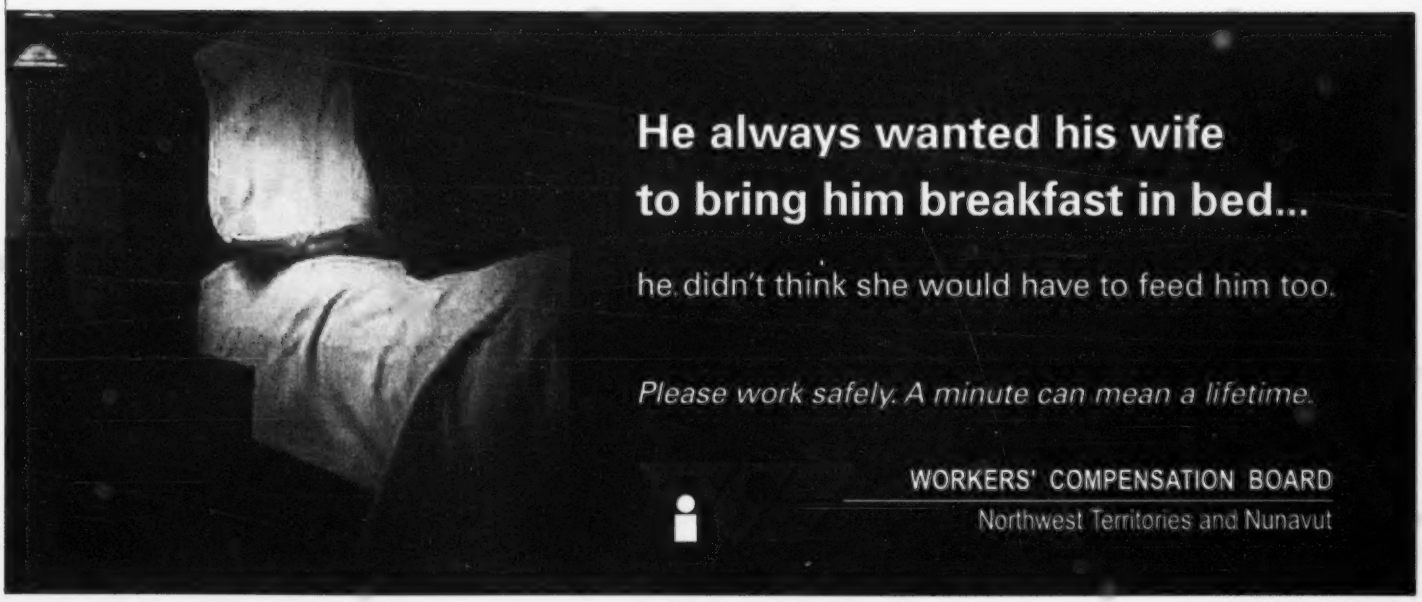
environment, and to understand the medical needs of each individual worker.

As part of the clinic, the WCB also supplies a spare prosthesis to each worker. Having a spare prosthesis provides these workers with more freedom and flexibility. If one becomes broken or is in need of repair, they no longer face the unnecessary inconvenience of living without it and can carry on, as normal, until the next clinic or scheduled check-up in Ottawa. Holding the clinic in Iqaluit has also provided the WCB with the benefit of trained translators. Claimants are provided service in their first language at home, and the WCB is able to obtain accurate medical history and updates.

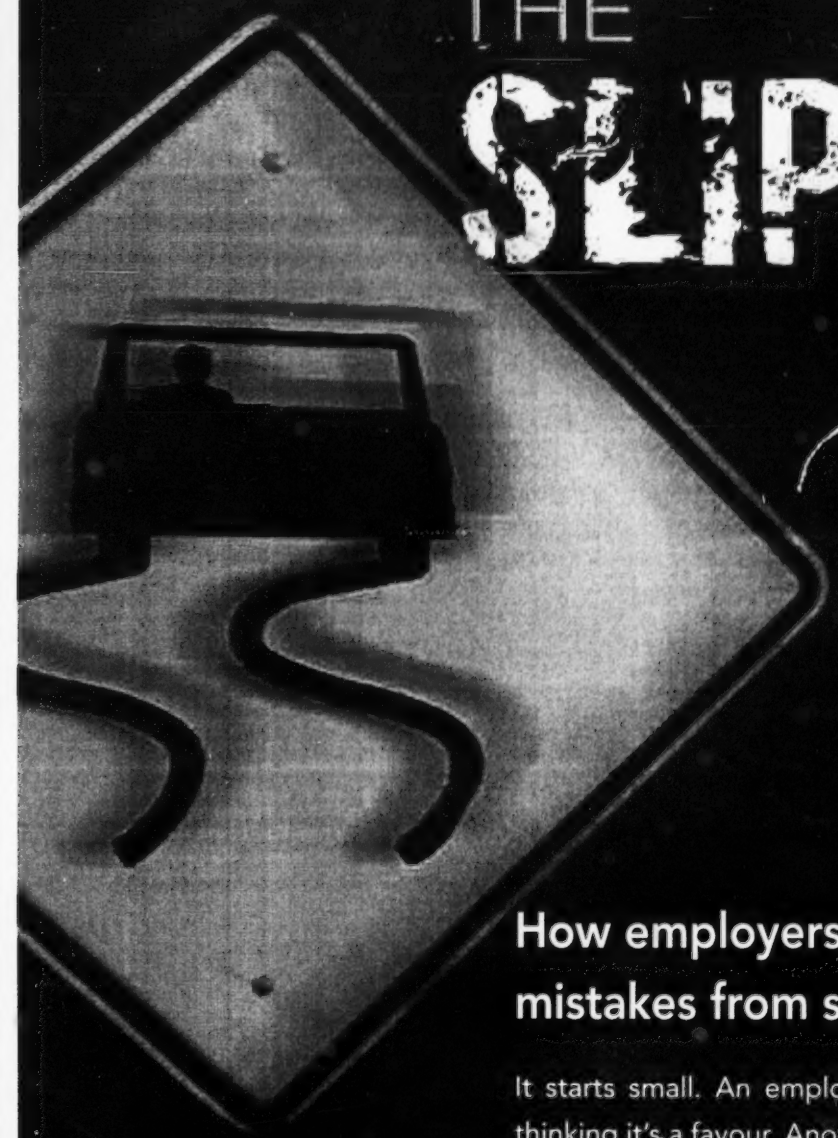
This past year, eight workers with amputations visited Nunavut's capital to attend the Prosthetics Clinic, including Annie and Ben. Ben is now 82 years old, and still drives his snowmobile around town. He tires easily and can't do what he used to, but he still finds ways to help. Ben is an elder; he "knows the wise ways" and continues to share his knowledge with his community. Although Annie will miss teaching her grade two students, she looks forward to retiring. In May 2004, she was inducted into the Order of Canada for her many contributions to the North, and is known across Nunavut as an outstanding educator and community leader.

Although the clinic has proven to be beneficial, the type of work that can be done is still limited by the lack of prosthetic tools and equipment. However, the WCB is committed to continuing its efforts to improve this program and other services to better accommodate injured workers across the North. Ben, Annie, and the other six amputees that attended the 2007 Prosthetics Clinic provide northern workers with inspiration. They are living proof of what can be done. They are human success stories.

Since 2000, the WCB has processed claims for 71 work related amputations: 18 thumbs, 44 fingers, 6 toes, 1 hand, and 2 legs.


He always wanted his wife
to bring him breakfast in bed...
he didn't think she would have to feed him too.
Please work safely. A minute can mean a lifetime.
WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD
Northwest Territories and Nunavut

THE SLIPPERY Slope



How employers can keep common mistakes from snowballing into fraud

It starts small. An employer pays a worker under the table thinking it's a favour. Another employer keeps a worker on the payroll instead of reporting the accident to avoid disrupting the worker's paycheques, or underreports how serious the injury is so a worker can keep working. It can even start as a mistake. An employer doesn't report payroll correctly. Another might not know workers' compensation costs aren't shared by workers, and deducts all or some of the cost from workers' paycheques.

While these things might seem harmless at first, they can actually hurt workers and, in some cases, could be considered fraud. To make sure simple mistakes don't snowball into fraud, as an employer, there are a few things you should know.

"Paying workers under the table is actually a form of workers' compensation fraud," says Shara Haggett-Shupe, NWT Operations Manager of Claims Services, referring to the practice of paying employees in cash.

Workers and employers might feel they are all getting a good deal. Workers feel they are being paid more because there are no deductions. Employers' assessments are lower because they are not reporting their actual payroll amounts to the WCB. This practice, however, makes it very hard for injured workers to get the WCB benefits they are entitled to.

"Employers should also be aware that they can't deduct any of what they are required to pay the WCB from their workers' paycheques," adds Ms. Haggett-Shupe. "Workers also shouldn't report themselves as independent operators when they really work for the employer."

As an employer, here's a heads up on some of the things you need to know – and do:

- Unregistered employers not only have to pay the assessments they owe, they might also have to pay late fees. Be sure to register with the WCB within 10 days of starting business. An employer can also become responsible, up to $10,000, for any claims related to injured workers if this employer was not registered.
- You need to register with the WCB even if you are only doing work in the NWT or Nunavut for one day.

While these things might seem harmless at first, they can actually hurt workers and in some cases could be considered fraud.

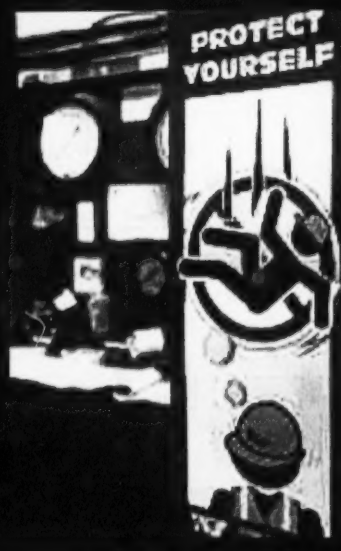
"All workers are covered under the *Workers' Compensation Act*," clarifies Ms. Haggett-Shupe. "But benefits are calculated based on your earnings. If workers can't show proof of income because they don't have pay stubs or T4 slips, it means their compensation will be calculated as less than they are really entitled to get."

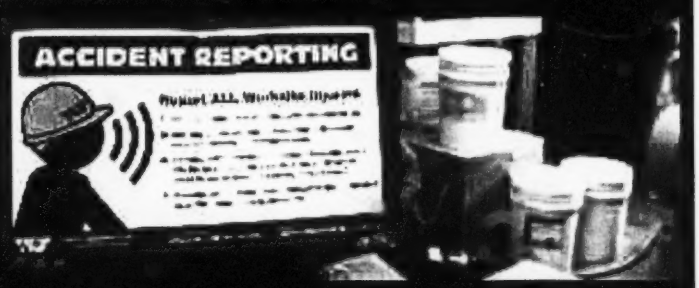
Not reporting accidents can hurt workers in the long run. So can reporting them inaccurately. "For example, an employer might report no time loss and keep paying the worker, even though he or she is really unable to work," says Ms. Haggett-Shupe. "The employer might want to do workers a favour by keeping them on pay."

This is not as harmless as it might seem. "If an employer minimizes the injury and there are complications down the road," Ms. Haggett-Shupe goes on to say, "then the WCB doesn't have the necessary medical information on file to cover and manage the worker's long-term recovery."

- When reporting assessable payroll, remember to include wages of both permanent and non-permanent workers. As outlined in the Workers' Compensation Act, pay such as overtime, piecework, bonuses, gratuities, holiday pay, recorded tips, pay in lieu, training on the job wages, and vacation travel allowance has to be included as part of assessable payroll.
- When calculating workers' wages, don't deduct any workers' compensation costs.
- Report any incidents that require first aid, even if there is no time loss. Make sure to give as much detail as you can. This way, the WCB has all the necessary information on file to help injured workers.
- Submit an Employer's Report of Accident within three days of learning about an accident.

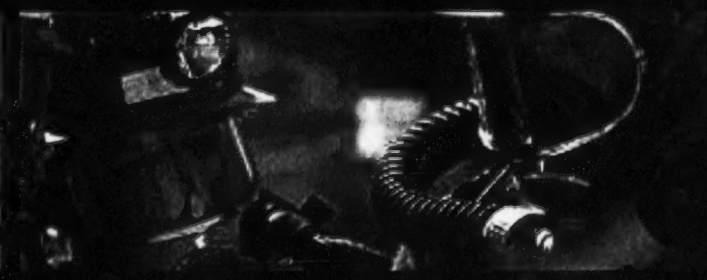
FORT SMITH | YELLOWKNIFE | IQALUIT | RANKIN INLET | NORMAN WELLS | HAY R





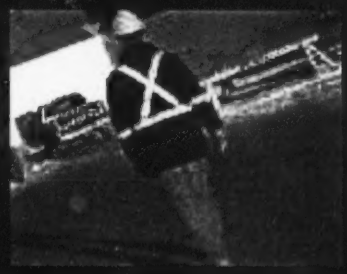
WORKING TOGETHER

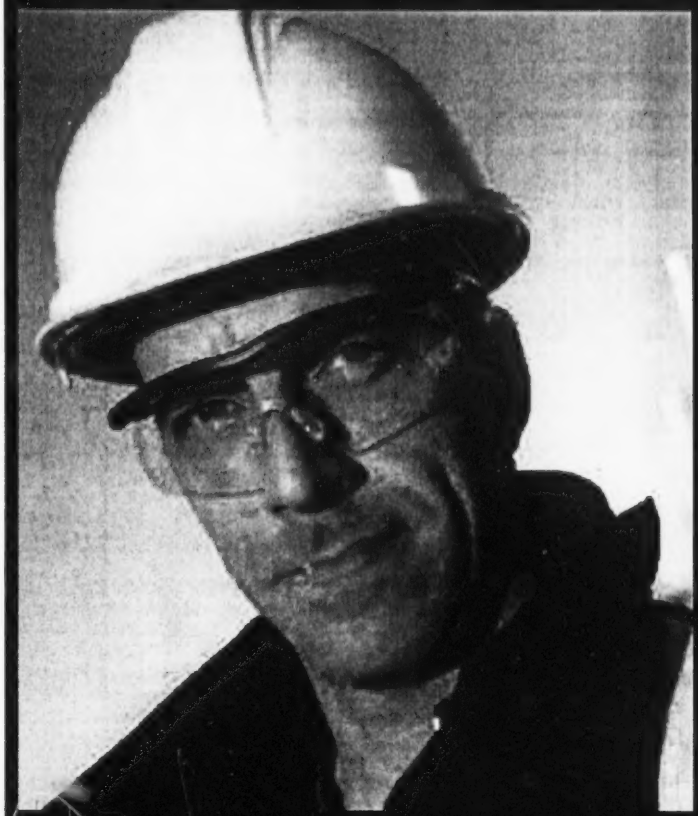
for workplace safety in your community



ARVIAT | IGLOOLIK | WRIGLEY | PANGNIRTUNG | KUGLUKTUK | FORT SIMPSON

IVER | CAMBRIDGE BAY | HOLMAN | GAMETI | TULITA | BAKER LAKE | BEHCHOKO

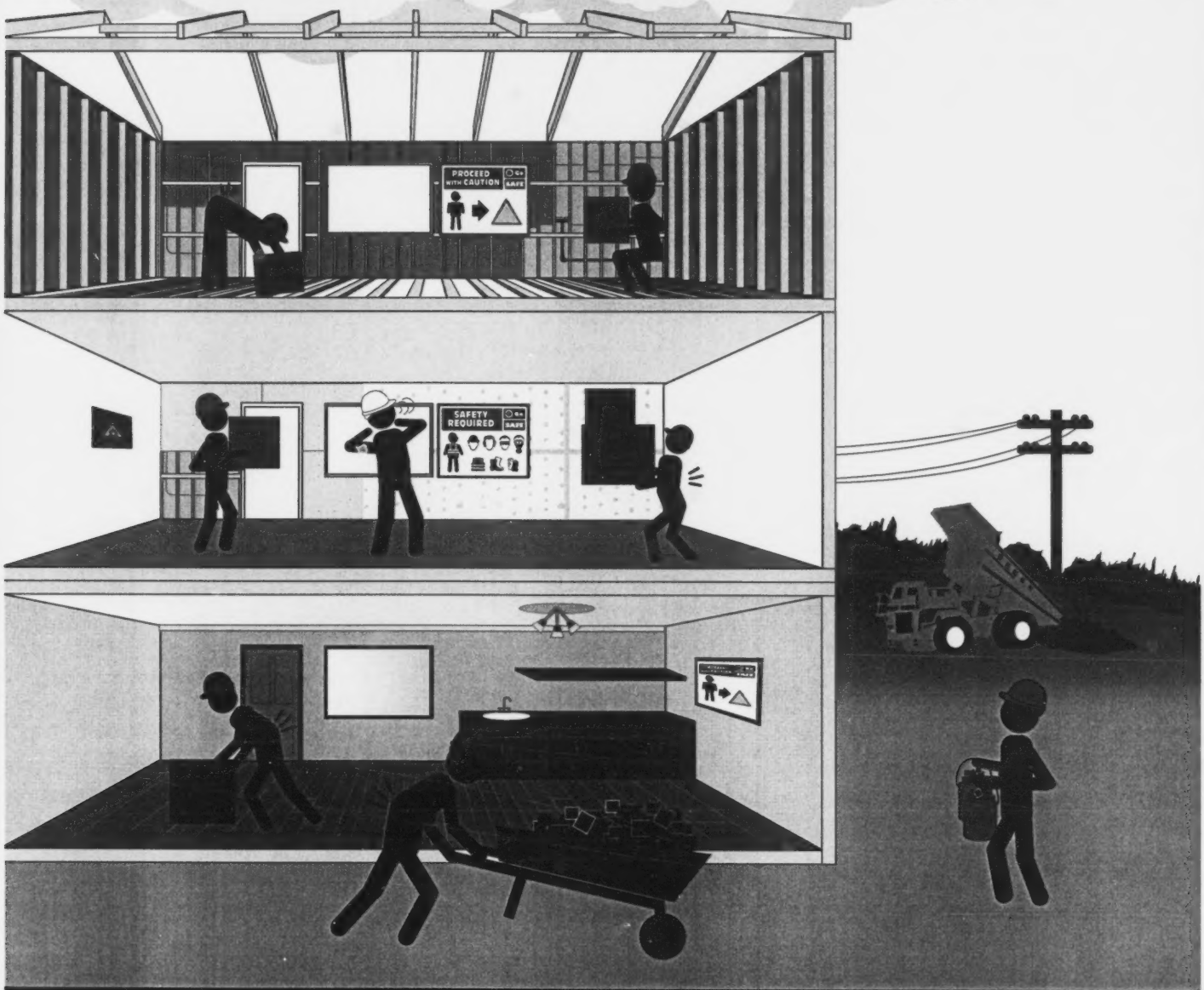




| INUVIK | LUTSELK'E | PAULATUK | SACHS HARBOUR | TSIIGEHTCHIC |

OVEREXERTION

caused 1 in 4 time loss claims last year.



Overexertion happens when people push their bodies too far.

GO SAFE. KNOW YOUR LIMITS.

What *WE* Can Do:

TRAINING on THE JOB

Part of caring for injured workers is helping them get back to work. The WCB knows returning to work has therapeutic value, and has programs in place to help injured workers return to their jobs. But sometimes it just isn't possible for a worker to go back to work for their original employer. So, where does that leave the injured worker? Through the WCB's Training on the Job program, it can lead to a whole new set of opportunities.

Injured workers might not be able to go back to their original jobs for a number of reasons. Some injuries leave workers with restrictions that prevent them from doing their old jobs. In some cases, a job can't be modified to meet these limitations, and the original employer doesn't have another job the worker can do. In other cases, the original job might expose a worker to the risk of re-injury. If workers are faced with any of these factors, they might qualify for Training on the Job.

"Training on the Job is one of the programs offered through the WCB's Vocational Rehabilitation Initiative," explains Michelle Currimbhoy, a WCB Case Manager. "It's a unique program, because we use the injured worker's transferable skills and seek out a job they might already be partly qualified for."

When a worker qualifies for Training on the Job, he or she works with a vocational counsellor. Together, they look

for an employer with a job the worker can do with some training. Once the employer and counsellor determine how much training the worker needs, the WCB and employer will agree on partial salary reimbursement. This means the WCB pays back part of the worker's wages to the employer until the worker's training is complete.

"The Training on the Job program benefits both the worker and the employer," Currimbhoy goes on to say. "The worker is able to make use of skills he or she already has, to learn new skills while working, and at the end of the training, they are able to do the job. As for employers, most new hires need training on the job anyway. Through this program, employers get to hire a worker who is already skilled and partly qualified, and training costs are offset with the partial salary reimbursement."

While this program is clearly "win-win" for both parties, it currently doesn't see many employers taking advantage of it. Currimbhoy suggests this is because employers are not widely aware of the benefits to both them and to the injured workers who qualify. What employers may not know is they don't need to have a worker currently in the workers' compensation system to participate in this program. All they need is to have an appropriate position available.

"It's hard to find employers to participate," Currimbhoy says. "Hopefully, they will become more aware of the program, and let us know when they have opportunities for workers to train on the job."

Employers interested in our Training on the Job program can contact WCB Claimant Services.

WCB maintains assessment rate & awards employer rebate

The 2008 average assessment rate remains $1.71 per $100 of assessable payroll and, due to favourable investment returns, northern employers received a 30% rebate on their paid 2006 assessment premiums. This rebate totalled nearly $10.5 million, and was awarded to all active employers in good standing with the WCB.

"We are happy to pass WCB investment success to our stakeholders," says Denny Rodgers, Chairperson of the Governance Council. "We are here to serve them, and are dedicated to doing what we can to ensure WCB services are affordable for employers, while still providing fair benefits to workers."

$1.71 per $100 of assessable payroll
2008 Average Assessment Rate

For your actual employer subclass rate, see the 2008 Rate Guide on the WCB website at www.wcb.nt.ca.

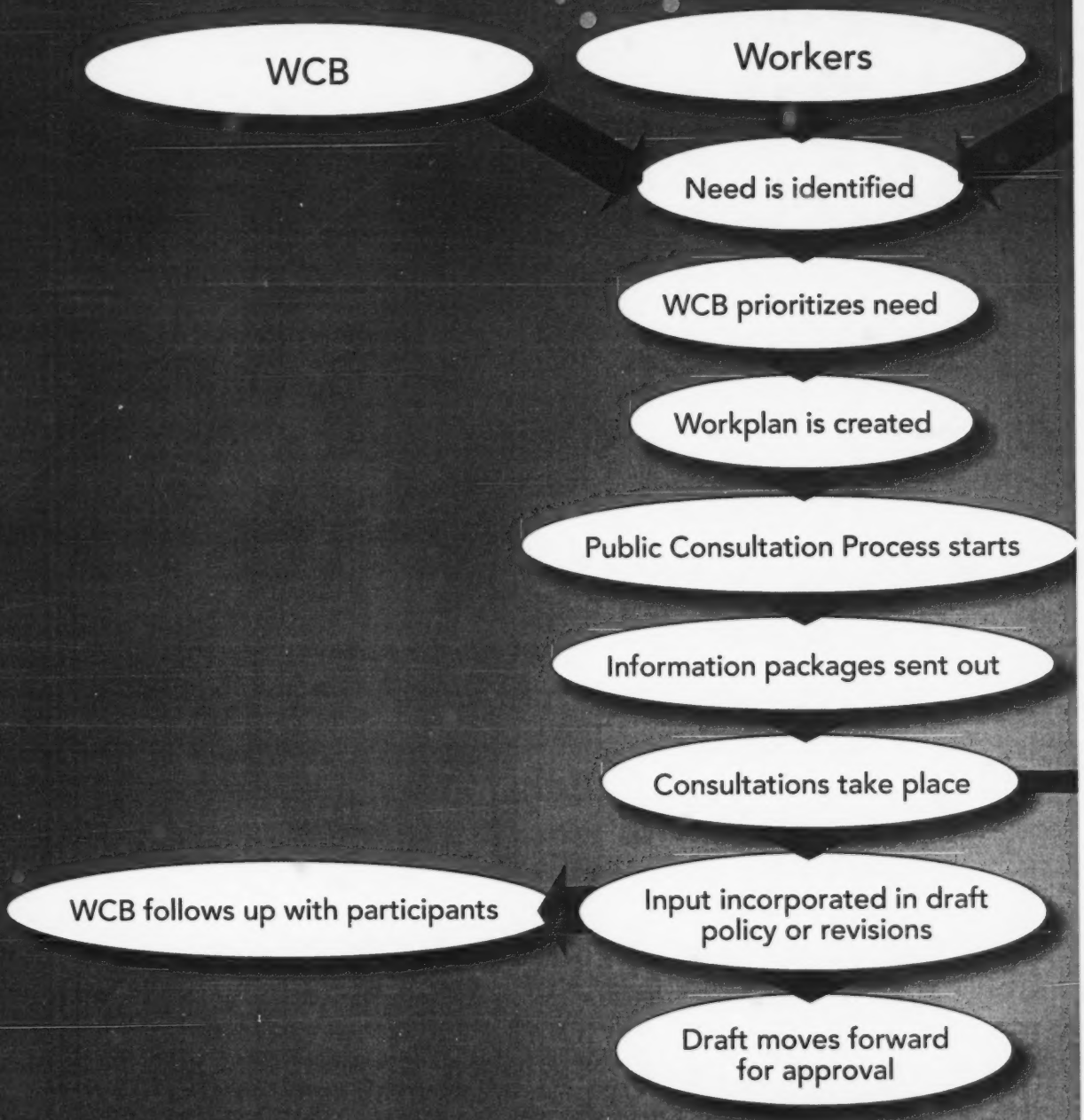
THE GOVERNMENT WORD JUNGLE

What's with the big words? Really. Have you ever tried to skim through government policy or legislation? It's like breaking trail in the jungle with a dull butter knife.

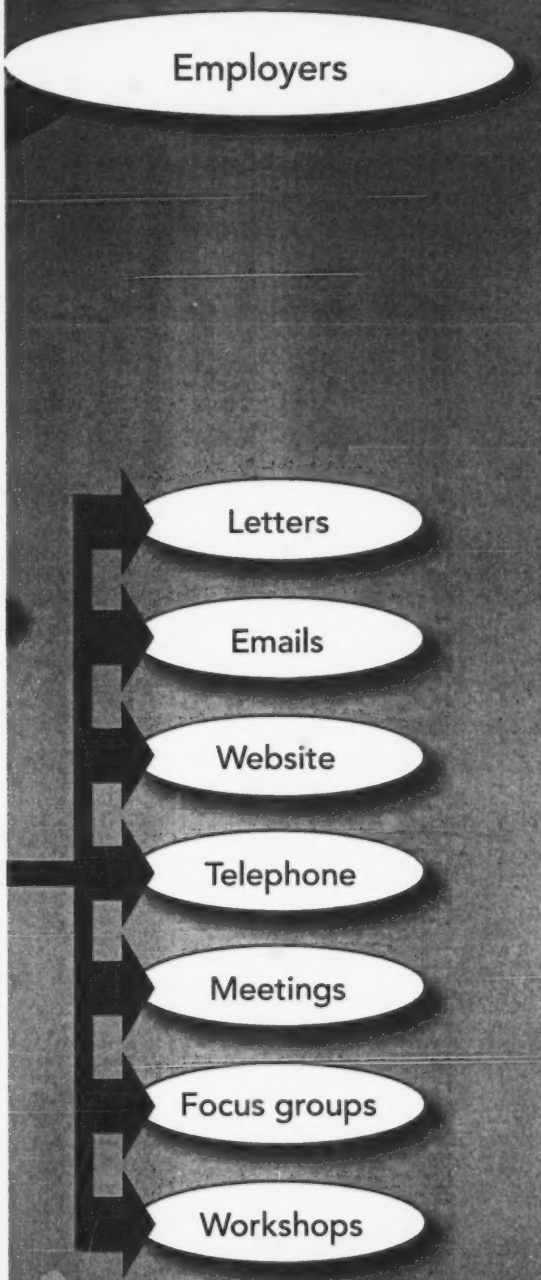
You make some ground at the beginning with "This policy sets out...". Your confidence is building as you weed through a few low vines and light foliage. You're gaining momentum until – SMACK – you walk into a thick bush packed with words like *framework*, *stakeholders*, *decision-making sphere*, and *appropriateness*. Your confidence deflates. The butter knife slides into your back pocket and you retreat from where you came.

Understanding policy and legislation should not be this hard. When it comes to finding your way through the government word jungle, the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (WCB) wants to give you more than a dull butter knife to use. The WCB is committed to keeping it as simple as possible and it starts with a conversation. A conversation between you, as an employer or a worker, and the WCB (and yes, you can leave your thesaurus at home).

POLICY CONSULTATION



PROCESS



The conversation takes place in the form of public consultations used in the policy development process. The policy development process starts when a need for a new policy, or a change to an existing policy, is recognized. This happens when someone speaks up. Sometimes, it is employers and workers bringing up issues and other times it is someone from within the WCB noticing a need. The WCB makes it its business to respond to every single policy inquiry. From here, the WCB prioritizes the policy need(s) and creates a work plan(s) to tackle its development or revision. Public consultations are often included in the work plan.

Depending on the issue(s) being discussed, consultations can take many forms and are conducted through one, or a combination, of the following methods: letters, emails, website, telephone, meetings with representative associations or individuals, and focus groups or workshops. To make sure everyone taking part is on the same page, the WCB prepares information packages for each participant to review. The packages include an outline of issue(s) under review, the issue(s) history and background, and any possible options the WCB is currently considering. The WCB will also research the issue(s) and give you any relevant material found.

After consultations are finished, the WCB takes your comments back to the drafting table for further thought. Input is incorporated into the draft policy or revisions. The conversation between you and the WCB doesn't end here. Your input is valued and appreciated. The WCB takes the time to follow up with everyone who took part in consultations to let them know what kind of input was received, what the final policy decisions are, and why those decisions were made.

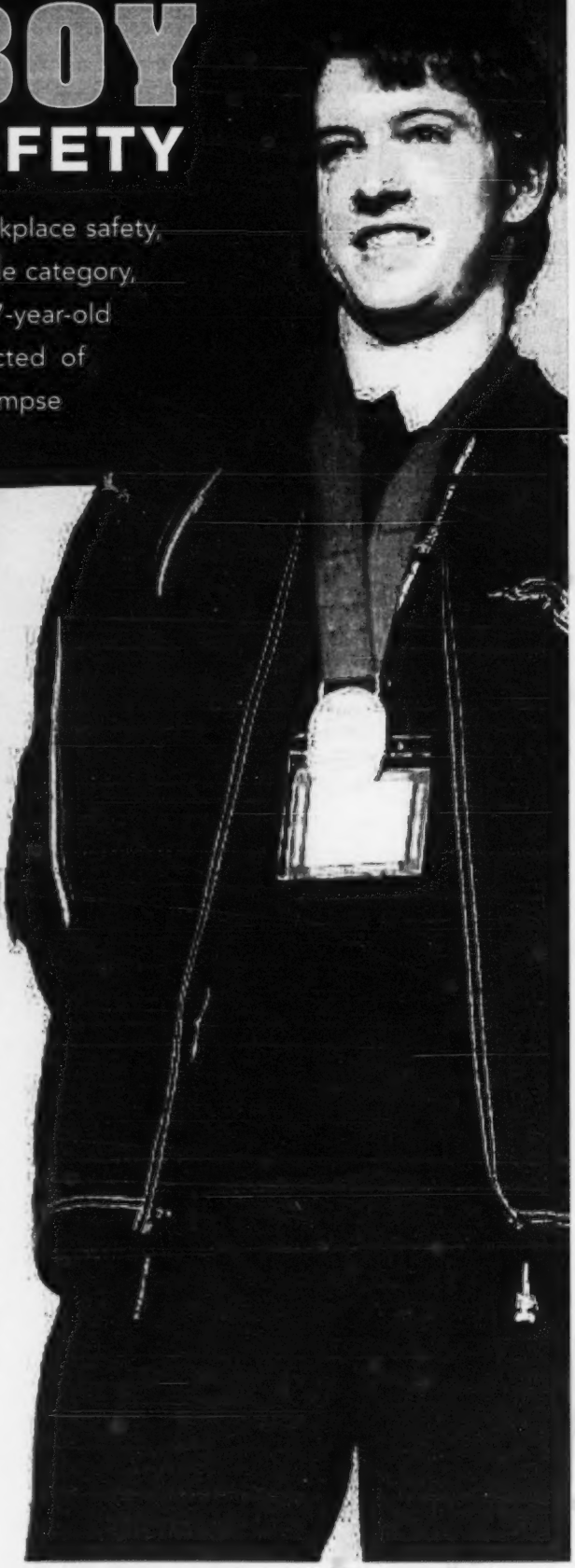
In the government word jungle, the WCB goes to great lengths to keep you from getting lost in the underbrush. Public consultations are a navigation tool. They break down the *decision-making sphere* of legislation and policy *framework* for *stakeholders* to ensure *appropriateness*...

In real words, public consultations help keep WCB policy simple and effective so that you know what's going on and why.

Go ahead; put your butter knife back in your kitchen drawer.

THE GOLDEN BOY OF WORKPLACE SAFETY

Four Territorial Skills Competition gold medals for workplace safety, as well as a gold medal at the national level in the same category, isn't a bad record for one high school student. But 17-year-old Peter Boggis shrugs it off with the aloofness expected of a teenager. If you watch closely though, you catch a glimpse of pride in his half-hidden smile.



"It was something I could apply to any part of my life," says Boggis of his interest in the competition, where Skills Canada NWT and the WCB combine efforts to educate northern youth on the importance of workplace safety. The WCB engineers and evaluates the workplace safety components of the territorial competition. In return, Skills Canada NWT ensures all workplace safety competitors have completed the WCB's *Workplace Safety: Safety and the Young Worker* program.

In 2003, following his completion of the *Workplace Safety: Safety and the Young Worker* program as mandated by his school, Boggis chose to compete in the Junior Territorial Skills Competition. That year, he won his first gold medal and was invited to attend the national Skills Canada Competition.

The competitors at his first national level skills competition were more serious than Boggis, then only 14 years old, had anticipated. "I needed to show my personal connection to this," says Boggis of his initial competition style. "Really open up and put my heart into it."

For his second attempt at the national competition in 2006, Boggis stepped-up his game in preparation for a gold medal win. Competitors train for a written exam, a practical exam, and an oral presentation. Boggis used his oral presentation as a platform to highlight the ripple effect of workplace incidents, explaining it is not only the injured worker who suffers. He used his own personal connection to workplace safety in his speech: Boggis' grandfather was killed in a workplace incident. Identifying how workplace safety affects him and his family secured the northern teen a national level gold medal.

"Think about it: safety isn't just about the workplace," adds Boggis. "It's about all aspects of life."

WINTER TIRES

UNCOVERING THE SNOW TIRE DILEMMA

It seems as though tire style selection is almost as difficult as choosing your java at your local barista bar. There are summer tires, all-season tires, and winter tires. And, like the coffee selection, the line-up of tires can leave users confused about their contents and uses. Uncovering the truth behind winter tires could help keep your delivery drivers, and even your workers who occasionally use the company car, safe.

The "no maintenance" lifestyle implied by the all-season tire makes it the popular choice among drivers. But with a little research, it turns out the implication isn't all it's blown up to be. All-season tires were designed for a climate that boasts lots of sun, little rain, and no snow. So, as you can imagine, Canada's Arctic was not their test ground or target market. This means all-season tires are as effective at keeping you on winter roads as decaf would be at keeping you awake.

Winter tires, or snow tires, are specifically designed with the cold Canadian climate in mind: slippery conditions and cold weather. Winter tires have wedge-shaped treads with thousand of tiny cuts called *siping*. This design helps the tire push away loose snow, grip packed snow, and add extra bite to icy surfaces.

Most drivers install winter tires to avoid getting stuck, but one of their biggest advantages is incident avoidance. But winter tires only help you avoid incidents if they are used properly. Installing four winter tires is just as important as installing them in the first place. Putting only two winter tires on your vehicle can cause one end of the car to lose traction on corners, which results in fish-tailing. In the interest of keeping your co-workers and family safe, digging deeper into your wallets and splurging on the extra two winter tires is worth it.

There is a flip side to winter tires. The same design that gives them their unbeatable winter performance makes them unfit for warm weather. Snow tires are made of a softer substance than summer tires. Using them in warmer months wears the tire prematurely and cuts years off their life expectancy.

Although some all-season tires try to sell themselves as winter tires by imprinting "M & S" (mud and snow) on the sidewall, they are still all-season tires. A mountain/snowflake icon on the tire sidewall identifies true winter tires. The Rubber Association of Canada developed this icon to reduce confusion.

Now that we have solved your tire dilemma: next time you go for a 'cuppa', try a soy chai latte; it's light, sweet, and will warm you up. TCF

DUE DILIGENCE

is about **DOING** what's RIGHT

Did you know you are required by law to apply due diligence to ensure the safety of your workers? But let's face it; doing what's right won't come naturally if you don't understand what you are required to "due".

Due diligence is the process of putting your health and safety program into practice to the best of your abilities. It isn't enough to simply post safety rules and regulations in your workplace, then expect employees to read and follow them. Due diligence is a take action approach to workplace safety. It encourages business operators to ask: "what am I doing and what more can I do to keep my workers' safe?" Due diligence is all about creating a safety plan and documenting your actions as you follow that plan.

When safety officers visit a workplace to ensure employers are practicing due diligence, one of the first things they look for is documentation to show your business has an effective Occupational Health and Safety program. To do this, safety officers run through a detailed checklist with employers. Below are a few questions employers can ask themselves to find out if they are practicing due diligence. The complete Due Diligence Checklist is on the WCB website at www.wcb.nt.ca/safety_and_training/occupational_safety_health/responsibility_system.html.

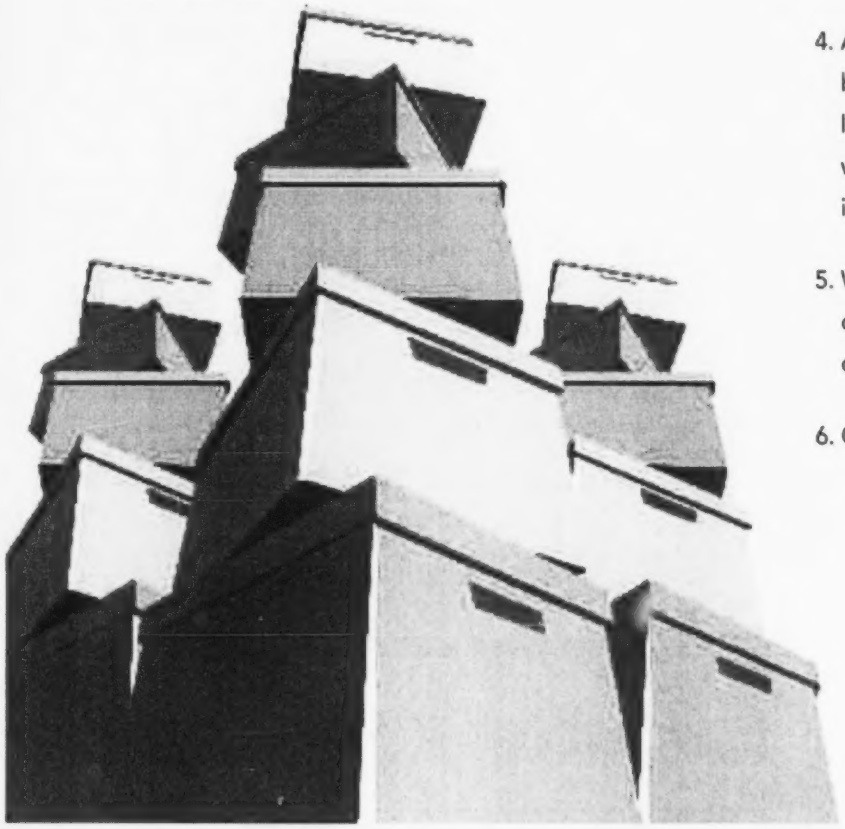
- ✓ Do you know and understand your safety and health responsibilities?
- ✓ Have you integrated safety and health into all aspects of your work?
- ✓ Have you committed appropriate resources to safety and health?
- ✓ Have employees been trained to work safely and use proper protective equipment?
- ✓ Is there a hazard reporting procedure in place that encourages employees to report all unsafe conditions and unsafe practices to their supervisors?
- ✓ Do you keep records of your program activities and improvements, and employee training?

Overexertion Due to Lifting

The Mission of the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut is to promote workplace safety and care for injured workers. In the spirit of preventing injuries, the Case in Point column is intended to highlight common injuries in the North and, above all, show how these injuries can be prevented.

A worker was carrying a five-gallon gas can and began to feel pain in his/her back. The worker continued to work for the remainder of the shift and felt the pain grow progressively worse the next day.

The worker sought medical attention and was diagnosed with lower back strain. He/she missed six days of work due to the injury. A claim for medical treatment and compensation for time lost from work was accepted by the WCB.



Doing it right!

Regardless of what you are lifting, the following basic techniques can be applied.

1. Keep your back straight. Bend at your knees, not at your waist. This will help you keep your centre of balance and allow your leg muscles to do the lifting.

2. Keep the load (weight) as close to your body as possible by grasping the load between your knees. Make sure your stance is comfortable and solid, with good foot placement shoulder width apart.

3. Lift smoothly and slowly.

4. Avoid awkward work postures such as bending, reaching, and twisting. Keep the load between your knees and shoulders, without twisting your body. Pivot your feet instead of twisting your back.

5. Whenever possible, don't lift or carry heavy objects. Instead, use an aid such as a cart, dolley, trolley, or hoist.

6. Get help from others if/when you need it.

WCB resources

Partners in Safety

NWT Construction Association
www.nwtca.ca

Yukon Construction Safety Association
www.yukonsafety.com

St. John Ambulance Canada
www.sja.ca

Canadian Red Cross
www.redcross.ca

Canadian Standards Association
www.csa.ca

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
www.ccohs.ca

National Occupational Health and Safety
www.canoshweb.org

Safe Canada – Government of Canada
www.safecanada.ca

Skills Canada
www.skillscanada.com

Worker's Rights
www.workrights.ca

Northern Construction Safety Association
www.ncsa-nt.ca
www.ncsa-nu.ca

Canada Safety Council
www.safety-council.org

Canadian Society of Safety Engineering
www.csse.org

Workers' Compensation

Workers' Compensation Board of the NWT and Nunavut
www.wcb.nt.ca
www.wcbnunavut.ca

Workers' Advisor's Office – Northwest Territories & Nunavut
www.waonorth.ca

Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada
www.awcbc.org

contact

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Centre Square Mall, 5th Floor
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Tel: 867.920.3888
Fax: 867.873.4596
Toll Free: 1.800.661.0792
Toll Free Fax: 1.866.277.3677

Iqaluit
Box 669, 1091 Baron Building
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
Tel: 867.979.8500
Fax: 867.979.8501
Toll Free: 1.877.404.4407
Toll Free Fax: 1.866.979.8501

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